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ABSTRACT

This practicum identified the problem of inconsistent use of developmentally appropriate practices by staff in an early childhood center and implemented an inservice program to increase the use of activities based on individual appropriateness rather than on age alone. The solution strategy utilized a self-assessment survey of classroom practices to identify staff perceptions. Ongoing inservice training was implemented, based on the survey, observations, and consultations with staff. The inservice sessions included large- and small-group training, consultations with staff, development of individualized goals, peer support teams, and a parent education component. Evaluation results indicated an increase in developmentally appropriate practices as well as other positive changes, although the established outcome levels were not attained. One unanticipated result was that following the implementation period, fewer staff responded that children engaged primarily in self-directed and open-ended activity. (Seven appendices include the classroom practices survey form, inservice agendas and evaluation form, inservice summaries, and an annotated bibliography. Contains 66 references.) (AP)

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ED 386 279

Increasing the Use of Developmentally Appropriate Practices by Teachers and Assistants in an Early Childhood Center Through Self-Assessment, Inservice Training and Peer Support

by

Candace Olin Kroehl

Cluster 50

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for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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Feb. 4, 1995

Date of Final Approval of Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
TABLE OF CONTENTS		iii
LIST OF TABLES		iv
ABSTRACT		v
Chapter		
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Description of Community	1
	Writer's Work Setting and Role	2
II	STUDY OF THE PROBLEM	4
	Problem Description	4
	Problem Documentation	6
	Causative Analysis	10
	Relationship of the Problem to the Literature	12
III	ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS	18
	Goals and Expectations	18
	Expected Outcomes	18
	Measurement of Outcomes	20
IV	SOLUTION STRATEGY	22
	Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions	22
	Possible Solution Strategies	22
	Evaluation of Solution Strategies	25
	Description of Selected Solution	27
	Report of Action Taken	30
V	RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	36
	Results	36
	Discussion	41
	Recommendations	50
	Dissemination	51
REFERENCES		52

Appendices Page

A CLASSROOM PRACTICES SURVEY 58

B INSERVICE AGENDAS 61

C INSERVICE EVALUATION FORM 72

D SUMMARIES OF INSERVICE MEETINGS 74

E STAFF AND PARENT UPDATES 80

F ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY 89

G GOALS SHEET 94

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1 Level of Training 5

2 Years of Experience 6

3 Responses of Inappropriate Classroom Practices 8

4 Areas of Concern from Classroom Observations 10

5 Responses to Self-Assessment of Classroom Practices 38

6 Frequency of Number of Inappropriate Responses 40

7 Observed Classroom Changes in Use of DAP 41

ABSTRACT

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This practicum focused on the problem of inconsistent use of developmentally appropriate practices by staff in an early childhood center. The goal of the practicum was to increase the use of developmentally appropriate practices. An expected outcome was that staff would plan activities based on individual appropriateness rather than age alone. Another expectation was that children would primarily engage in self-selected and open-ended activities. A third expectation was that staff would report the use of fewer inappropriate practices in their classrooms.

The solution strategy utilized a self-assessment survey of classroom practices to identify staff perceptions. Based on survey information, observations and consultations with staff, ongoing inservice training was implemented. The inservice training process included large and small group training sessions, consultations with staff, individualized goals and peer support teams. A parent education component on developmentally appropriate practices was included.

Results indicated some decreases in the use of inappropriate practices, but not in all areas that had been targeted. Planning based on individual appropriateness increased, but fewer staff reported primarily having child-selected and open-ended activities. However, the number of reported inappropriate practices decreased.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The community in which the writer worked is part of a medium-sized midwestern metropolitan area. It is located several miles from the downtown business district. The surrounding neighborhoods are mainly residential with some commercial properties. Housing ranges from economical apartment complexes to expensive single family homes. A section with many apartment complexes attracts singles, low income families and recent Russian immigrants. Many areas are established neighborhoods with single family homes which attract young families who remodel and enlarge older homes or occupy more modest homes in the neighborhoods. The vicinity is close to commercial and public services; public transportation; and cultural, educational and medical facilities. Although it is an older sector of the city, the area is undergoing a business and residential revitalization.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The writer's work setting was an early childhood center in a nonprofit community agency. The agency usually offered comprehensive educational and recreational programming for young children through senior citizens. However, an extensive renovation of the facility was in process which limited programming. Although the early childhood center was impacted, the center remained fully operational.

The early childhood center operated throughout the year. It was a licensed facility serving approximately 160 children, 2.5 through 6 years of age. The center offered full and half day preschool and kindergarten programs, with extended care available early mornings and late afternoons. Some classes were organized based on age while others were mixed-age groups. The children were primarily from middle class families, but the population served included those from diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.

The early childhood center had a staff of 27 teachers and assistants with varied training and experience. Eleven of 14 head teachers and 5 of 13 assistants had 4-year degrees in education or a related field. Two of 14 head teachers and 6 of 13 assistants did not have any preservice training in early childhood education. The range of experience for staff was from less than 1 year to more than 20 years. The staff turnover rate was low for head teachers

and greater for assistants. For the 1993-94 school year, two new head teachers and nine assistants joined the staff; for 1994-95, three head teachers and eight assistants were new. Several staff members had been with the school more than 15 years. Two individuals who had been at the center less than 3 years were recent immigrants from Russia.

State regulations for minimum qualifications for child care workers did not require all personnel to have preservice training in early childhood education. Head teachers could qualify through a combination of education and/or experience. No experience or education in early childhood studies was required for beginning assistants.

The writer was director of early childhood education programs. Responsibilities included all aspects of planning and supervising early childhood education programs and staff. An important role was to provide leadership for the implementation of the philosophy and goals of the school through training and supervision of staff.

The writer's qualifications exceeded state requirements for a director of a preschool and child care center. The writer had a B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies, an M.A. in Special Education and additional graduate studies in education. The writer had been director for 3.5 years and had previously been a head teacher and coordinator for extended day care at the center.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Head teachers and assistants of the early childhood center were not using developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) consistently. The quality of programs provided for children was affected by the extent to which staff implemented DAP. Developmentally inappropriate practices decreased the quality of programs, affecting opportunities to foster optimal social, emotional, cognitive and physical development in every child.

The writer noticed several indications of inappropriate practices. In some groups all children were expected to participate in large group, teacher-directed activities without other options offered concurrently. Many activities were teacher selected and directed. The writer had observed all children in a group sitting at a table doing identical art projects without other activity choices available at the same time. An experienced head teacher expressed frustration that the children were not able to do activities

which she considered to be age appropriate. Such a comment suggested that individual appropriateness had not been considered. Other indications of inappropriate practices were the observed difficulties at transition times and the use of negative limits and comments rather than a positive guidance approach.

The staff of the early childhood center had diversified educational and experiential backgrounds (see Tables 1 and 2). Some teachers and assistants had training in child development and the use of developmentally appropriate practices; others had not. However, even some of the staff with training did not use DAP consistently. Inservices were provided during the year which focused on a variety of topics related to early childhood education and developmentally appropriate practices, but these efforts had not resulted in increased use of DAP.

Table 1

Level of Training

	Head Teachers n=14	Assistants n=13
Relevant 4-year degree	11	5
Some relevant course work	1	2
Inservice training only	2	2
No training	0	4

Table 2

Years of Experience

	Head Teachers n=14	Assistants n=13
More than 10 years	4	1
5 to 10 years	5	2
1 to 4 years	5	3
Less than 1 year	0	7

The problem had not been solved previously because the inservice training approaches used had not been an effective means of changing staff practices. Staff views of personal classroom practices had not been assessed to determine each individual's perspective. Observations had not been made to evaluate the extent to which developmentally appropriate practices were implemented.

The problem was that developmentally appropriate practices were not being used consistently by teachers and assistants in the early childhood center.

Problem Documentation

The existence of the problem was supported by a staff self-assessment survey of classroom practices (see Appendix A) and observations by the writer. The writer used the Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991) to evaluate the use of

developmentally appropriate practices in the classrooms. Both the self-assessment of classroom practices and the Early Childhood Classroom Observation were based on guidelines suggested by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987). The self-assessment survey and observations were conducted in March, 1994.

The self-assessment survey of classroom practices consisted of 15 pairs of statements of developmentally appropriate and inappropriate classroom practices. Staff were asked to indicate which of each pair of statements was mostly like or somewhat like the classroom in which they worked. Twenty-one staff responded to the survey, 12 head teachers and 9 assistants. Twelve of the 21 respondents reported that four or more statements of inappropriate practices were mostly or somewhat like their classrooms. Table 3 indicates the most frequently reported developmentally inappropriate practices. Although the survey requested that the respondents select the category which best described their classroom, some staff responded with two answers, indicating that the classroom was somewhat like both the developmentally appropriate and inappropriate statements. These responses were not included in the totals listed in Table 3. However, it suggested that inappropriate practices were occurring to an even greater degree than

Table 3

Responses of Inappropriate Classroom Practices

Developmentally inappropriate practices	Mostly like statement	Somewhat like statement	Total n=21
	Number of responses		
Activities are planned based on expectations for the age of the group.	7	2	9
Music and physical education occur mainly during scheduled periods.	7	2	9
Teacher-selected and -directed projects are a regular part of daily activities.	6	1	7
Children are expected to participate in regularly scheduled whole group activities such as "Show and Tell".	6	0	6
Transitions are difficult times of the day.	5	1	6
Access to art materials is limited to those selected for each day by the teachers.	3	3	6
Children are expected to follow class rules.	4	1	5

indicated by the totals of single responses.

The writer observed classes using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991). This observation format utilized a three-point scale with 1, 2 and 3 indicating whether appropriate practices are not met, partially met or fully met. To provide an overview of the degree of DAP, ratings were averaged for each classroom as well as across all groups for each item. Average classroom ratings ranged from 2.46 to 2.96, with five of the classrooms receiving 2.9 or higher. Although this indicated that many developmentally appropriate practices were occurring at the center, a review of specific items suggested areas for improvement. Average item ratings ranged from 2.11 to 3. Several areas of concern related to the use of developmentally appropriate practices were indicated (see Table 4). Eight of nine classrooms observed did not have alternatives available during large group time. Seven of nine classrooms did not offer sufficient child-initiated activities and seven of nine did not demonstrate sufficient flexibility to change routines or planned activities.

Table 4

Areas of Concern from Classroom Observations

	n=9
Areas of concern	Average on 3-point scale
Options available throughout day	2.11
Limited large group, teacher-initiated activities	2.22
Flexibility to change plans	2.22
Helping children respond to negative feelings	2.44
Encouraging creativity	2.44
Time for self-selected activity	2.44
Smooth transitions	2.44

Causative Analysis

There were several causes of the problem of inconsistent use of DAP. A significant factor was that some staff had only limited training in appropriate early childhood educational practices (see Table 1). Without training, staff may not have had the knowledge to distinguish what is appropriate and what is not.

Another probable cause was that some staff may not have understood the concepts or misinterpreted the meaning of developmentally appropriate, even if the individuals had some coursework in early childhood education or inservice

training. Since adults have a variety of learning styles, information may not have been presented in a format which was suitable for the individual. The teacher who had a degree in education and many years of experience, but expressed frustration because many children in her group could not do activities which she considered to be age appropriate, thought she was planning developmentally appropriate activities.

Another causative factor of inconsistency in the use of DAP was that staff may have had difficulty identifying what was inappropriate. Many teachers have had difficulty seeing that holiday craft projects which require children to make a replica of a teacher-made model were developmentally inappropriate.

Perceived parental expectations were another causative factor. Parents can influence classroom practices by conveying to teachers appreciation of teacher-modeled products made by their children. Parents also expressed academic expectations to teachers and the director. A frequent parent inquiry concerned whether reading was taught. Parents can lack an understanding of what is developmentally appropriate for young children and expect teachers to fulfil their expectations of academic accomplishments.

One other probable cause of the inconsistent use of DAP

was that change can be difficult. Teachers who have used certain practices for a long time may resist change. Staff may need to be motivated to change and to learn new approaches.

All of the suggested causes appeared to be relevant as contributing to the problem. Observations by the writer and informal staff comments provided support for the suggested factors. Feedback at staff meetings indicated resistance to changes in practices such as holiday celebrations and a lack of understanding of why such activities were not developmentally appropriate. During individual conferences teachers discussed parental pressures and the writer had been confronted many times by parents who expressed a desire for a more academic program for their children. In addition, staff with limited training probably had not been exposed to the components of developmentally appropriate early childhood education.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature substantiates the existence of the problem of developmentally inappropriate practices with young children in preschools, kindergartens and child care centers. Burts et al. (1992) reported observing developmentally inappropriate practices in kindergarten classes. The authors indicated that characteristics of

classrooms which demonstrated inappropriate practices included greater amounts of time in transition and waiting, more teacher-directed activities and more punishment than was observed in classrooms using more developmentally appropriate practices. Burts et al. noted that children in developmentally inappropriate settings exhibited more stress behaviors than children in appropriate settings. The authors concluded that the study provided evidence "that developmentally inappropriate educational programs are potentially harmful to young children" (p. 315). Another indication of negative effects of developmentally inappropriate practices was reported by Fagot (1973). The author noted that children with directive teachers were not as independent in selection of activities and play.

Others (Elkind, 1987a; Sigel, 1987) concurred that developmentally inappropriate early childhood education is stressful for young children. Elkind indicated that teacher-directed instruction can be detrimental to children's motivation for self-directed learning. Elkind commented, "The child may learn to become dependent upon adult direction and not to trust his or her own initiative" (p. 111). Sigel, another proponent of the harmful effects of developmentally inappropriate practices, indicated that young children are under increased pressure to accelerate and perform academically. The author commented,

"Acceleration places children at risk for stress-related difficulties, for developing a faulty sense of personal worth, and for intellectual burnout" (p. 138). Unfortunately, Bredekamp (1987) and Elkind (1987b) indicated that formal academics have increased in early childhood programs.

Theories of child development support the importance of using developmentally appropriate practices with young children. Erikson (1963) proposed that one stage of healthy development of young children is the growth of a sense of autonomy. Erikson commented, "From a loss of self-control and of foreign overcontrol comes a lasting propensity for doubt and shame" (p. 254). Following autonomy, Erikson's next stage is development of initiative. In this stage a sense of actively pursuing goals evolves, but with the risk of feelings of guilt. From this theoretical perspective, fostering self-direction in young children is an important component of healthy development. From a cognitive perspective, Piaget and Inhelder (1969) emphasized the significance of play and concrete experiences in the development of young children.

Positive effects of DAP are indicated in the literature. Schweinhart and Weikart (1993) reported that high quality, developmentally appropriate preschool programs had significant positive effects into adulthood, based on

findings from the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study which followed participants up to 27 years of age. Although the population studied was from families living in poverty, the authors suggested that all children benefit from quality early childhood programs. However, Zigler (1987) contended that the effectiveness of early education programs such as the Perry Preschool project cannot be generalized to other populations since positive results were for the distinct group of economically disadvantaged children. Zigler indicated other problems with a broad application of the study results since there were additional mitigating factors such as involvement of families and voluntary participation.

Other studies (Dunn, 1993; Frede & Barnett, 1992; Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Rescoria, 1989; McCartney, 1984; Phillips, McCartney & Scarr, 1987) documented the positive effects of DAP. Hyson et al. noted positive correlations between appropriate/inappropriate practices and guidance techniques, based on National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) guidelines. Dunn reported positive correlations between a varied play setting and higher levels of elaborate adult-child interactions and nurturing guidance techniques. McCartney and Phillips et al. found that verbal interactions between adults and children correlated with language and social development. Frede and Barnett observed that developmentally appropriate

programs can have positive effects on academic skills.

Another aspect of the problem which was reported in the literature was teacher perception of the extent to which DAP is implemented in classrooms. Hyson et al. (1989) and Mattke (1990) reported that teachers viewed themselves as using developmentally appropriate practices to a greater degree than actually occurred. This inaccurate perception of teaching practices, paired with the possible negative effects of developmentally inappropriate practices, supported the legitimacy of the problem.

Various causes of the problem of developmentally inappropriate practices with young children have been explored. Several authors (Copple, 1991; Jorde Bloom & Sheerer, 1992; Zigler and Lang, 1991) suggested staff in child care centers do not have sufficient training. The Children's Defense Fund (1994) reported that only 16 states required child care center teachers to have some preservice training. Another factor was high staff turnover due to low wages and poor working conditions which resulted in inexperienced and inadequately trained staff (Whitebook, Howes, Phillips, & Pemberton, 1989). The importance of training was evident in findings of correlations between training and quality of programs (Children's Defense Fund, 1994; Whitebook et al., 1989). Arnett's (1989) findings that staff with minimal or no training were more

authoritarian and punitive than staff with some training supported a training and quality association.

Other authors suggested additional causes of the problem. Mangione (1992), Miles (1991) and Jones (1993) indicated that staff may not understand DAP. Jones commented, "Teachers won't consistently implement developmentally appropriate practice unless they have constructed their own understanding of it" (p. 147). Miles also noted that staff may not want to change practices which they have used for a long time or are comfortable to them. Others have indicated that inservice training may be unsuccessful if adult learning styles, needs and concerns are not considered (Massey, 1978; Rosenholtz, 1991; Varah & Hallman, 1989).

Another aspect suggested by Miles (1991) was that staff may be trying to please parents. Elkind (1987b) and Sigel (1987) emphasized the increase in parental pressure for developmentally inappropriate programming. Mattke (1990) noticed that teachers sometimes attributed problems to the children rather than to inappropriate practices.

The significance of the problem of inconsistent implementation of developmentally appropriate practices with young children was documented and causative factors were indicated in the literature. This evidence supported the existence of the problem described by the writer.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum.

The goal of the project was to increase the use of developmentally appropriate practices by teachers and assistants in an early childhood education program. An expectation was that the writer would observe more consistent use of DAP in the classrooms. Another expectation was that staff would perceive the use of more appropriate, as compared to inappropriate, practices with their groups of children.

Expected Outcomes

Several outcomes were expected following the implementation phase. The first one was that staff would report that planned activities available to children were based on observations of individual appropriateness rather than age alone. Evaluation was to be achieved through

responses to a choice of appropriate/inappropriate statements on a staff self-assessment survey of classroom practices (see Appendix A) completed at the end of the implementation period. The standard of achievement was that 18 of 21 staff would indicate planning based on observations of individuals.

Another anticipated outcome was that staff would report that children primarily engage in self-selected activities and open-ended art activities. The evaluation tool was to be a staff self-assessment survey of classroom practices (see Appendix A) on which staff would indicate a choice of appropriate/inappropriate statements. The survey was to be completed at the end of the implementation period. The standard of achievement was that 18 of 21 staff would indicate children primarily engage in self-selected activities and open-ended art activities rather than teacher-selected and -directed projects.

A third expected outcome was that staff would report increased consistency in the use of developmentally appropriate practices at the end of the implementation phase. Evaluation was to be accomplished through the administration of a staff self-assessment survey of 15 developmentally appropriate/inappropriate classroom practices (see Appendix A). The standard of achievement was that 18 of 21 staff would indicate three or less

inappropriate practices.

Another proposed outcome was that classrooms would have options for large, small and individual activities throughout most of the day. Evaluation was to be achieved through observation by the writer using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991). The standard of achievement was that all classrooms would demonstrate options.

The final expected outcome was that classrooms would emphasize child-initiated activities while limiting staff-initiated large group activities. Evaluation was to be through observation by the writer using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991). The standard of achievement was that all classrooms would emphasize child-initiated activities rather than staff-initiated, large group activities.

Measurement of Outcomes

At the end of the implementation period outcomes were measured in two ways. The first measurement was the completion of the self-assessment survey of classroom practices (see Appendix A) by staff. The survey required written responses which indicated the individual's perception of classroom practices to be mostly like or

somewhat like either a developmentally appropriate or inappropriate practice. The survey was untimed and completed individually. This was the same instrument used to survey staff perceptions of appropriate and inappropriate practices which provided evidence of the problem prior to the implementation period. The survey items were based on NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) of developmentally appropriate classroom practices.

The second method of measurement of outcomes was through observations of classrooms by the writer. The Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991) was used as the observation instrument. This was the same observation tool utilized during the problem definition phase. This instrument was selected because it is an assessment of developmentally appropriate practices as indicated by NAEYC guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987).

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Possible Solution Strategies

The problem was that developmentally appropriate practices were not being used consistently by teachers and assistants in an early childhood education center. A review of the literature suggested several solution strategies which were considered.

Several authors recommended the use of self-assessments to identify classroom practices, develop inservices and as an ongoing process to facilitate change (Connecticut State Department of Education, 1990; Fore, 1992; Wright, Burt & Sugawara, 1989). The Connecticut State Department of Education suggested using a self-assessment questionnaire as a means of setting priorities and planning goals and objectives. Fore indicated that a self-assessment instrument which was based on the NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices "should facilitate developing inservice training" (p. 7).

Training and inservices were suggested frequently as solution strategies in the literature. Abbott-Shim (1990) and Frede and Barnett (1992) recommended training and ongoing evaluation. Epstein (1993) reported that effective training included both theory and practice and should consider adult learning theory. Others also emphasized the importance of planning training based on adult learning theory. Jones (1986), Bierly and Berliner (1982) and Wood and Thompson (1980) recommended offering options for activities to accommodate differences in learning styles, needs and motivations. Several authors suggested that training should be based on each individual's current knowledge and experiences (Arends, Hersh, & Turner, 1980; Jorde Bloom, 1988a; Ovando, 1990).

Christian and Bell (1991) proposed providing inservices on DAP and visiting other programs which demonstrate appropriate practices. The authors suggested that videotapes could be used to share visits with other staff. Mangione (1992) found that training and follow-up consultations were effective in fostering change to developmentally appropriate practices in a study of preschool and kindergarten teachers. Miles (1991) proposed analyzing inappropriate practices and indicated possible substitutions which would be more appropriate. For example, Miles suggested that teacher-selected and -directed projects

were developmentally inappropriate. As a developmentally appropriate alternative, open-ended art materials could be available for self-selection by the children.

Another solution strategy which was discussed in the literature emphasized the importance of a support system for staff as new skills and approaches are learned. Mattke (1990) commented, "Assimilating the total concept of developmentally appropriate practice is a difficult enough task; taking the next step and making meaningful changes in existing program content requires further assistance" (p. 15). One recommended method to provide support is to use peers as mentors and as a source of feedback (Arends et al., 1980; Decker & Dedrick, 1989; Jorde Bloom, 1988b; Lambert, 1985; Little, 1982; Poelle, 1993; Wood & Thompson, 1980; Wright et al., 1989). Jones (1993) recommended a facilitation model using either external facilitators such as consultants or college instructors, or internal facilitators such as the director or other teachers.

An additional approach to increasing the use of developmentally appropriate practices was suggested by Epstein (1993). Based on observations of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Project, a parent involvement component was recommended. Epstein commented, "Parents, some of whom were initially skeptical, came to appreciate the importance of play in children's learning. Their emphasis on `traditional

academics' decreased" (p. 161). Therefore, parental support of developmentally appropriate practices could decrease pressure on teachers to continue to use inappropriate practices.

Another component of a solution strategy which was considered was to individualize staff goals for increasing developmentally appropriate practices. Also, staff could be encouraged to attend relevant conferences or classes at local colleges and funding assistance could defray costs.

Evaluation of Solution Strategies

Several of the solution strategies which were discussed in the literature could be feasible in the writer's work setting. Self-assessments of classroom practices had been used to provide evidence of the problem of inconsistent application of developmentally appropriate practices. Self-assessment questionnaires could be incorporated as part of an ongoing process to assist in identification of goals, planning of inservice training and monitoring of changes.

The strategy of providing inservice training was a feasible option. Based on the literature, effective inservice training is dependent on many factors. It would be important to consider the status of staff experience and knowledge, as well as individual learning styles. Information from self-assessment surveys could indicate areas for training. Training could incorporate both theory

and practice. Miles' (1991) model of the analysis of inappropriate practices encompassed both and could be utilized to demonstrate interrelationships. To accommodate differing staff needs and styles of learning, training could include working toward individualized goals. An individualized approach would not only facilitate working toward meaningful goals, but would allow each individual to pursue goals using methods which were in accordance with each worker's most effective learning style. Another component which could be feasible is the inclusion of continuous evaluation and feedback to staff.

Another feasible solution strategy was the use of peers as mentors and facilitators. Jones (1993) suggested that external facilitators can be very effective, but this was not a viable alternative in the writer's work setting because of budgetary restraints. However, teachers can be peer-mentors. The use of peer-mentors also can aid in individualizing training. Sharing experiences of other teachers can be accomplished through visits to other programs but this would be more difficult to achieve since it would require released time for staff. Finding substitutes for classrooms can be difficult, as well as having a negative impact on the budget. However, if model programs are available, this could be possible on a limited basis. A more realistic option was to have teachers within

the center observe one another. The essential aspect of all these options appeared to be providing continuous consultation and feedback within an ongoing training process.

External staff training through college classes and conferences was a more difficult solution strategy to implement. Although staff were encouraged to expand their professional skills, the financial resources needed to fully sustain this option were not available. The center only can provide small incentives to help defray some of the costs when staff attend local conferences.

The suggestion of parent education and involvement was a viable strategy. Information on developmentally appropriate practices could be incorporated into parent meetings and events, such as Back-to-School Night and Open House, and during home visits by teachers. A parent newsletter also could be used as a forum for reinforcing supportive views about developmentally appropriate practices.

Description of Selected Solution

Many of the solution strategies appeared to be appropriate for implementation in the writer's work setting. However, to most effectively accomplish the goal of increasing the use of developmentally appropriate practices,

a combination of strategies seemed most applicable to the needs of the center and staff.

The selected solution strategy included providing ongoing inservice training as a means of increasing staff knowledge about developmentally appropriate practices and improving implementation skills. Both theory and practice were incorporated into the training. This was based on the premise that if staff were to achieve the general goal of increasing developmentally appropriate practices, and the specific objective of planning based on individual appropriateness, then teachers and assistants first must have sufficient education and training to understand the concepts. The literature (Children's Defense Fund, 1994; Jones, 1993; Whitebook et al., 1989) supported the relevance of this premise.

Another component of the selected strategy was to pair staff with peer-mentors who could act as models, coaches and facilitators to assist individuals in expanding and constructing their understanding of developmentally appropriate practices. The assumption was that peer support could assist in attaining the classroom objectives of more options during the day; increased child-selected and -initiated activities; and more open-ended activities.

A third component of the selected strategy was self-assessment to assist staff with identification of

inappropriate practices. This aided in setting goals, planning group inservice sessions, and continuous monitoring of changes. The setting of individualized goals worked in conjunction with self-assessment. The aim of individual goals, and ongoing consultations and feedback, was to help staff focus on specific objectives which were most pertinent for their classrooms. The individualized goals, combined with the guidance of peer-mentors was to provide support through the change process. Goal-setting could assist in the attainment of the objectives by indicating direction and defining the scope of changes.

The solution strategy also included a parent education component on developmentally appropriate practices to increase the understanding of families of appropriate approaches in early childhood education. As suggested by Epstein (1993), parents may be more supportive of teacher efforts and programming with a greater understanding of DAP, rather than advocating for more academically focused activities.

A final element of the solution strategy was to provide learning options to accommodate different staff learning styles and motivations, an aspect of training indicated to be important in the literature ((Massey, 1978; Rosenholtz, 1991; Varah & Hallman, 1989). The assumption was that if inservice training sessions and individualized training

components considered learning styles and needs, staff might be more likely to attain goals.

Report of Action Taken

During an eight-month implementation period, the writer proceeded through a series of steps to execute the solution strategies. The population involved in the implementation were the teachers and assistants working in the early childhood education programs. The writer provided leadership for the project but encouraged others to assume active roles at various stages. For example, the assistant director conducted some of the inservice training sessions.

The first step was to develop inservice training based on identified needs, as indicated by information collected from observations, staff self-assessment surveys and consultations with staff. The data suggested that there were several significant facets of developmentally appropriate practices which were not implemented consistently in classrooms. These included planning activities for individual appropriateness; emphasizing child-initiated activities; having sufficient choices and options to group activities; providing easily accessible art materials; demonstrating flexibility to change plans in response to group needs; and using positive guidance and discipline techniques.

During the planning phase and throughout implementation, consideration was given to structuring inservice training to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for staff and to accommodate a diversity of adult learning styles. Large group sessions were planned to provide input through a variety of media and active learning experiences, involving staff in the learning process with the writer acting as a facilitator.

Information collected suggested that different groups of staff were at varying developmental levels professionally and had diverse training needs. Similar to Arnett's (1989) findings, the writer observed that many assistant teachers, who as a group had less training and experience than head teachers, were not able to effectively use positive guidance and discipline techniques in their interactions with children. However, head teachers were much more adept in these techniques. Therefore, training for assistants was planned and conducted on this topic.

Inservice training occurred throughout the implementation period, but was especially emphasized at two transition points in the program, at the beginning of the summer session and prior to the fall term. These were significant times as there were staff changes and the focus of the program shifted during the summer months to increased outdoor activities and a camp-like atmosphere. During the

second month of the implementation period, in June, one orientation session for new staff and two inservice sessions for all staff were scheduled. At the end of August, the fourth month, another orientation for new personnel was conducted and several large and small group meetings occurred with participation of all staff in several sessions appropriate for their needs. In addition, another all-staff session was conducted in July, the third month. Staff also met in smaller groups throughout the implementation phase. All assistant teachers attended three sessions, once a month, during October, November and December, the sixth, seventh and eighth months of the implementation period. Developmentally appropriate practices were the focus of all the inservice meetings (See Appendix B). Different topics were emphasized at each session, but presentations included both theory and experiential learning opportunities. Information was delivered in a variety of ways through videotapes, articles, discussion, brainstorming and role-playing. At the end of August, one of the topics was setting up the environment in accordance with DAP. This was relevant to everyone since all classes were relocating to new space, and everyone would need to arrange their classrooms. The information was presented through a videotape, Setting up the learning environment (High/Scope Press, 1992), discussion and sharing articles relevant to

the topic. Following each session, staff were asked to evaluate the inservices and make suggestions for future training (See Appendix C).

Inservice training sessions were followed up by written summaries of meetings (See Appendix D). Staff, also, received weekly updates (See Appendix E) which included schedules of special events, supplementary materials related to inservice topics and any additional communication which all employees needed to know. Also, additional resources and references (See Appendix F) were available to staff so that they could pursue topics of interest in greater depth.

In addition to inservice training provided at the center, staff were encouraged to participate in opportunities available within the community. All staff attended a half-day conference for early childhood educators as part of the August training sessions. Each individual was able to select workshops to attend from several offerings. A few individuals chose to attend other workshops or conferences during the implementation period.

Another component of the implementation was to foster a supportive learning environment for staff through peer-mentor pairings. Initially, all staff were asked to participate in peer-mentor pairings. However, it was observed by the writer that interactions between peer-mentors were limited. Therefore, as an alternative,

staff were grouped into peer-teams of four to six individuals, including both teachers and assistants. Each team worked with similar class groupings. Interactions were encouraged through team meetings which highlighted topics of mutual concern or interest and encouraged team curriculum planning. Each peer-team had an inservice session in August (See Appendix B) and continued to meet intermittently during the following months.

Another form of ongoing contact and training was through individual consultations. Meetings were both scheduled and spontaneous in response to needs. During these meetings discussions centered on positive aspects of classroom functioning, developmentally appropriate curriculum planning and any current problems or concerns. Staff also discussed and defined individual goals during these meetings (See Appendix G). As suggested by Jorde Bloom, Sheerer, and Britz (1991), goals emerged from the consultations between staff and director or assistant director. "When directors include staff in goal setting, they express confidence in their staff...The director's role is facilitative in the sense that she can help ensure that the individual is setting realistic and achievable goals" (Jorde Bloom et al., p. 108).

Since teachers sometimes try to please parents who ask for developmentally inappropriate activities, it seemed

pertinent to attempt to increase parental knowledge of DAP and how young children learn. Therefore, a parent education component was planned. A significant part of this occurred at Back-to-School night in September, during month five. As Epstein (1993) suggested, staff training components can be modified for parent education. Parents participated in a hands-on demonstration, similar to staff training activities, on how children learn while playing with blocks (Dodge, 1993). Parents also received information on how children learn through play. Teachers reinforced the developmental approach during home visits in August and conferences with parents during October and November. In addition, parents participated with their children in classes on Parent Day in October. Parents also received written communication through newsletters, updates (See Appendix E) and shared articles such as "On Wednesdays I Can't!" (Chenfeld, 1994).

Throughout the implementation phase, evaluation of all components was ongoing and adjustments made as necessary. The change in approach to developing peer support was an example of how the writer adjusted solution strategies in response to evaluation of effectiveness of actions taken.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The problem which was targeted in this practicum was that developmentally appropriate practices were not being used consistently by teachers and assistants in an early childhood education center. Staff completed a self-assessment survey of classroom practices (See Appendix A) which indicated preferences for developmentally appropriate or inappropriate practices. In addition, the writer observed classrooms, using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991) to assess classroom practices. Observations and survey responses suggested that some staff emphasized teacher-selected and -directed activities, provided limited options from which children could choose activities, did not consider individual appropriateness of activities, and used negative limits instead of positive guidance techniques.

The implemented solution strategy was a multifaceted approach to the problem. The strategy emphasized ongoing

inservice training which was responsive to staff needs, developmental levels and learning styles. A second facet was to foster a peer support system through peer-mentors and peer-teams. Staff were encouraged to assess themselves and set individual goals to pursue. To assist with this process, the director and assistant director consulted with staff individually. One additional factor of the solution strategy was to include a parent education component on developmentally appropriate practices as a part of the process.

Several outcomes were anticipated. The first projected outcome was that 18 of 21 staff would indicate on the self-assessment survey of classroom practices (See Appendix A) that the planned activities available to children in their classrooms were based on observations of individual appropriateness rather than age alone. When the self-assessment survey was administered at the end of the implementation period, 15 of 21 staff indicated that their classrooms were mostly or somewhat like the statement that activities were planned based on observations of the individual children (See Table 5). Although this indicated an increase in developmentally appropriate practice, the projected standard was not achieved.

The second anticipated outcome was that 18 of 21 staff would respond on the self-assessment survey that children

Table 5

Responses to Self-Assessment of Classroom Practices

Developmentally appropriate practices	Mostly like	Somewhat like	Total n=21
	Number of responses		
Activities are planned based on observations of the individual children in the group.			
Presurvey	7	2	9
Postsurvey	10	5	15
Children primarily engage in self-directed activity centers and open-ended art projects.			
Presurvey	8	3	11
Postsurvey	4	5	8

primarily engaged in self-selected activity centers and open-ended art projects. However, responses after the implementation period indicated that only eight staff perceived that their classroom practices were mostly or somewhat like this expectation of developmentally appropriate practice (See Table 5). However, of the 12 staff who responded to both the presurvey and postsurvey, seven individuals, each time, indicated that their classrooms were mostly or somewhat like a primarily child-directed and open-ended approach.

A third expected outcome was that 18 of 21 staff would

indicate that three or less inappropriate practices of the 15 dichotomous statements on the self-assessment survey were mostly or somewhat like their classroom practices. The results indicated that 12 of 21 staff indicated three or less inappropriate practices. Before the implementation period eight staff indicated three or less inappropriate practices to be mostly like or somewhat like their classrooms. Although this suggested an increase in staff perception of the use of DAP, the stated standard was not attained. However, of 12 staff who responded to both the presurvey and postsurvey, 9 of 12 indicated a decrease in the use of inappropriate practices. Also, the number of inappropriate responses decreased (See Table 6). Another positive indication of decreasing use of inappropriate practices was that on the presurvey the maximum number of mostly and/or somewhat like the inappropriate choices was

Table 6

Frequency of Number of Inappropriate Responses

	n=21	
No. of Inappropriate Responses	Presurvey	Postsurvey
0 - 3	9	12
4 - 7	10	7
8 - 15	2	2

13 of 15 statements, while on the postsurvey the maximum number was 8 of 15 statements.

Two additional projected outcomes were measured by the writer's observations, using the Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991). The first was that all classrooms would have options available for large, small and individual activities throughout most of the day. This criteria was met for eight of nine classrooms. Although the goal of all classrooms demonstrating this indicator of DAP was not met, progress was made. Prior to the implementation period observations suggested that only one of nine classrooms met the criteria.

The final projected outcome was that all classrooms would emphasize child-initiated activities rather than teacher-initiated, large group activities. Although this standard was not achieved, six of nine classrooms were observed to emphasize child-initiated activities as compared with two of nine during initial observations.

Observations after implementation, using The Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991), suggested other positive changes. The average scores for classrooms increased. After the implementation period, average classroom scores ranged from 2.94 to 3, with five classrooms scoring 3, compared with a range of 2.46 to 2.96 at the time of the initial

observations. As indicated in Table 7, the average item scores also increased, with scores ranging from 2.66 to 3.

Table 7

Observed Classroom Changes in Use of DAP

	n=9	
Areas of concern	Average on 3-point scale Pre	Post
Options available throughout day	2.11	2.88
Limited large group, teacher-initiated activities	2.22	2.66
Flexibility to change plans	2.22	2.77
Helping children respond to negative feelings	2.44	3.00
Encouraging creativity	2.44	3.00
Time for self-selected activity	2.44	2.88
Smooth transitions	2.44	3.00

Discussion

The results achieved by the implementation of solution strategies indicated an increase in developmentally appropriate practices, which was the overall goal of the practicum. Positive changes occurred, although the established outcome levels were not attained.

One unanticipated result was that after the implementation period fewer staff responded that their

classrooms were mostly like the statement, "Children primarily engage in self-directed activity centers and open-ended art projects," than before the practicum (See Table 5). This finding is somewhat in contrast to the writer's observations which suggested improvement in time for self-selected activities (See Table 7). Several factors may account for the discrepancy. One is that The Early Childhood Classroom Observation (National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, 1991) utilizes a subjective scale. During the periods of time the writer observed classrooms, a variety of self-selected activities were generally available. However, when staff indicated their perceptions of classroom practices they may have considered a more global time frame. Another factor may be that staff had an increased conceptual understanding of DAP and may have judged their own classroom practices more rigidly than at the time of the initial survey. An additional explanation could be continued resistance to change established teaching habits which included teacher-directed projects.

Several other factors may have influenced the overall results in relation to stated outcomes. One such factor was that during the eight-month implementation period, some staff left the center and new personnel were hired. As indicated in the literature (Copple, 1991; Jorde Bloom & Sheerer, 1992; Whitebook et al., 1989), staff turnover is a

significant problem in child care centers which effects the quality of programs and the level of staff training. A consequence of staff changes was that not all the staff participated in all the training sessions.

A second mitigating factor was that the center was undergoing extensive renovation during this time period, creating a stressful work environment. In addition to being surrounded by construction and concerned about safety issues, the teaching staff was substantially impacted by decreased outdoor play space and the relocation of all classrooms at the end of August. The enormous task of moving and setting up classrooms preoccupied staff, even during scheduled training sessions. In response to this need, some of the August inservice focused on setting up classroom environments in developmentally appropriate ways, but staff were more concerned with the practical aspects of the move, rather than the theoretical perspective.

A third possible factor in not attaining the expected outcomes was that the projections may have been too ambitious for the limited time frame. Weikart (1994) observed that a considerable amount of time was needed for staff to adopt new ideas. He commented, "It takes about a year to incorporate the ideas, and then several more years for the curriculum to become `owned' by the participant" (p. 98). From this perspective, the progress reflected by the

results of the practicum can be considered a favorable beginning.

Throughout the implementation period, there were many indiçations of positive change. All of the inservice training sessions elicited positive feedback from staff. With the exception of two individuals who responded positively but with reservations to the questions of usefulness and effectiveness of inservice sessions, all other respondents indicated that the inservice sessions presented useful information in an effective manner. The inservice formats of mixing presentation media, including hands-on experiences and having small and large group brainstorming, was received enthusiastically by most staff. Many commented that it was helpful to hear the ideas of others. This type of format also seemed to reflect some of the aspects of an adult learning model as advocated by Jones (1994). Jones commented, "Adult learners, like children, need to play-to take initiative, make choices among possibilities, act, and interact. Adults also need to go beyond play, to engage in reflection and dialogue about their experiences" (p. 128).

The activities that were especially well-received were the hands-on ones. It was in relation to these that staff comments suggested that theory and experience were blending to construct concrete impressions and influence attitudes

and practices. The June inservice sessions on developmentally appropriate practices emphasized individual differences, how children think and learn and the effects of appropriate and inappropriate activities (See Appendix B). Experiential training exercises suggested by Dodge (1993) were utilized at these sessions. Afterward, one of the less experienced assistants commented, "The hands-on activity helped me understand the level the children are on." An experienced teacher remarked, "It was a good review for me, reminding me of how children think and learn. The hands-on activities gave me an opportunity to think and learn the way a child would do in the classroom." Another individual noted, "It taught me to always give positive remarks, never negative ones." As Miles (1991) suggested, some were learning to substitute appropriate practices for inappropriate ones. In addition, staff who had different experiences and were at different professional developmental levels appeared to gain in their own way from the training experiences.

The inservice session on curriculum webbing also resulted in positive feedback from staff. Again, using a hands-on project, brainstorming and working in small groups were generally construed as constructive experiences, as indicated by comments such as "brainstorming is very useful; sharing everyone's ideas was great." Many expressed

enthusiasm for ideas that could be taken back to the classroom. A young assistant remarked, "It is amazing to me how you can pick just one topic and expand it so that there are so many activities for the children to do." Staff responsiveness to practical training is supported by the findings of Pofahl and Potaracke (1983).

Another positive effect of emphasizing hands-on experiential learning was that as the workshop leader, the writer was able to model appropriate practices. Following one of the August peer meetings in which staff explored curriculum areas such as block play in a developmentally appropriate way for young children, a participant commented, "The low-key style of running the workshop made it much easier for us to be ourselves...it was a good model for the atmosphere I'd like to incorporate in class."

Sharing relevant literature also received positive feedback. One teacher indicated that she had incorporated some of the ideas from an article into her classroom practices. She added that she read and saved all the handouts in a file for future reference. Wolfe (1994) had reported that a survey of Head Start personnel had indicated that handouts were an effective way of reinforcing learning and helping to apply learning to practice. Throughout the implementation, the writer shared information with staff and utilized resources which had permissive copyrights which

allowed photocopies to be made and shared with staff and parents.

As part of the evaluation of each training session, staff were asked to suggest other topics on which they would like to have more information. Many ideas were suggested and some of these were incorporated into later inservices. After the June sessions, suggestions included webbing and information about handling behavior problems. Webbing became the focus of the July session, and handling behavior problems was discussed at the three meetings for assistants. Many of the other suggestions will be incorporated into future training sessions.

The parent education component generated less feedback than the staff components. However, since changing attitudes is a long process, what has been done is just the beginning. This was clearly illustrated by the comments of the parents of one child at the center who had stopped by to say how much they enjoyed the program on DAP at Back-to-School night but were the same parents who wanted an academically oriented program three months later. However, teachers who have increased their understanding of DAP have become more adept at sharing the accomplishments of the children with parents in a manner that conveys developmental growth and attainments. One teacher commented, "Ideas on how to tie parents into what goes on in the classroom were

most helpful to show them what their kids are accomplishing, if in different ways."

Another area in which positive signs of change were noticed was in the individual goals which some staff selected. One teacher indicated that the self-assessment survey helped her to identify a goal. She commented, "From completing the classroom practices survey, I can see that I would like to improve...as related to positive limits." She indicated several steps which included helping the children identify problems and using dramatics and puppetry to demonstrate problem-solving and alternative solutions. The teacher who had expressed frustration during the problem identification phase because children in her group were not able to do activities which were planned based on age, indicated during a conference in the sixth month of implementation that her goal was to identify individual goals for each child in her group. Other teachers focused on improving informal assessment through observation and keeping anecdotal records, or developing portfolios. Some referred to working or consulting with other staff as a way to accomplish goals such as problem-solving how to handle difficult behaviors or devising more developmentally appropriate curriculum. This was especially encouraging as evidence that teachers were beginning to use one another as resources and as sources of support. Finally, one teacher

identified a goal which seemed to encompass many of the concepts that had been discussed, "To provide a variety of themes which will challenge our group to communicate better, think and work creatively and contribute to the activity at hand by spinning off into their own interpretations of the `planned' lesson or activity." Her goal seemed to incorporate providing a rich environment and stimulating activities with the openness for children to create and think.

The strategies to foster peer-mentoring had mixed results. When staff were paired, some of the pairs interacted and provided support, but for others this did not seem to be working. Part of the problem may have been lack of sufficient time to connect with one another at length and to exchange classroom visits. Poelle (1993) had emphasized the importance of classroom observations as a facet of the mentoring process. To improve this situation, staff were grouped into peer-teams and periodic meetings were scheduled. Although this formalized the relationships initially, it helped to establish dialogues. For some of the teams, the dialogues led to supportive relationships, problem-solving, team curriculum planning and team-teaching efforts to better meet the needs of the children in their groups.

The results of the practicum suggested that use of DAP

by child care center staff can be increased through the use of self-assessment, inservice training and peer support. However, the process takes time. Ongoing, experiential training in response to staff needs seemed to be an effective approach to building theoretical concepts and fostering application in the classroom.

Recommendations

The results of the practicum suggest several recommendations to enhance staff implementation of DAP.

1. Evaluate training needs through classroom observations, staff self-assessment and staff input.
2. Provide ongoing staff training based on staff needs.
3. Emphasize experiential learning activities, small group discussions, brainstorming and follow-up information.
4. Encourage the development of peer support through peer team meetings, problem-solving and sharing of ideas. Staff can serve as resources to one another.
5. Consult regularly with staff and foster development of individual goals to assist staff in focusing on specific areas for improvement.
6. Convey principles of DAP to parents through workshops, involvement in classrooms and written information to foster understanding of program philosophy and share goals for children.

The results of the practicum indicated that there is a need for continued work toward increasing the use of developmentally appropriate practices. The writer will continue to monitor progress and continue the strategies used in this project to increase attainment levels. Staff will continue to work toward their individually defined goals and ongoing inservice training will be scheduled. In addition, conveying developmentally appropriate practices to parents will continue. One part of of this process is a planned family education program in which parents and children will participate together in science activities which demonstrate developmentally appropriate curriculum.

Dissemination

The writer plans to share the results of this practicum with others in the field of early childhood education. A proposal to present a workshop at the state Association for the Education of Young Children Conference in March, 1995, has been accepted for presentation.

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APPENDIX A

CLASSROOM PRACTICES SURVEY

Classroom Practices Survey

For each pair of statements, indicate which best describes your classroom:

1 mostly like statement A
2 somewhat like statement A
3 somewhat like statement B
4 mostly like statement B

	Statement A	Statement B
___	Teacher-selected and -directed projects are a regular part of daily activities.	Children primarily engage in self-selected activity centers and open-ended art projects.
___	Children are permitted to play alone, nearby others, in small groups or to join in large group activities.	Children are expected to participate in regularly scheduled whole-group activities such as "Show and Tell".
___	The calendar is a daily large group activity.	Time and sequence concepts are presented as part of interest centers and through concrete experiences (such as sequencing beads).
___	Discipline and guidance are managed through redirection, verbal encouragement, and arrangement of space.	Discipline and guidance are managed through rewards, time-out, and verbal reprimands.
___	Readiness concepts such as letters and numbers are presented through photocopies/workbooks, rote (such as alphabet song), and/or activities such as letter days or week.	Readiness concepts are presented through interest centers, stories, and a whole language approach using concrete experiences.
___	Drawing and writing materials are readily available at centers.	Children are expected to write their names and/or letters.
___	Transitions are difficult times of the day.	Children are prepared for transitions and assisted with them.

___	Music and large motor activities are integrated into the curriculum.	Music and physical education occur mainly during scheduled periods.
___	Limits are stated in negative terms.	Limits are established in a positive manner.
___	Teachers do not interact with every child individually.	Teachers interact frequently with children by listening and conversing.
___	Activities are planned based on expectations for the age of the group.	Activities are planned based on observations of the individual children in the group.
___	Children are helped to identify feelings and problem solve.	Children's feelings are not recognized and solutions to problems are provided by adults.
___	Access to art materials is limited to those selected for each day by teachers.	Many art materials and mediums are available daily, including the easel.
___	Children are expected to follow class rules.	Positive limits are discussed and demonstrated regularly.
___	Teachers communicate on a regular basis with parents.	Communication with parents focuses on negative behaviors and problems.

APPENDIX B

INSERVICE AGENDAS

INSERVICE AGENDAS

New Staff Orientation (June 2, 1994)

12:30 - 1:30 p.m. Review job responsibilities and essential procedures, including health and safety. Every individual will receive a manual for reference and review.

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. DAP workshop: View NAEYC video, Curriculum: The Role of the Teacher (Jones, 1988). Discuss the role of adults in the classroom. Copies of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (Bredekamp, 1987) will be available for staff to borrow.

2:30 - 3:00 p.m. Discussion of positive discipline and guidance techniques.

All-Staff Session 1 (June 6, 1994)

6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Get acquainted and supper.

7:00 - 8:00 p.m. DAP workshop: Considering individual differences in children. Workshop activities from Dodge (1993). A guide for supervisors and trainers on implementing The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood (3rd ed.). Washington, DC: Teaching Strategies.

1. Brief discussion of how staff perceive the thinking and learning processes of children. (15 minutes)
2. Staff divide into three groups. Each group has a different activity. One group considers pictures drawn by children of "what happens to a cookie after someone eats it" (Dodge, p. 60), another reviews comments by children and the third group considers children's responses to questions about whether or not things are alive. Each group discusses what the items indicate about children's thinking and how responses differ among children. (15 minutes)
3. Large group discussion. Each small group shares observations. A discussion follows, based on observations, of the teacher's role in facilitating learning. (30 minutes)

8:00 - 8:30 p.m. Review responsibilities and safety policies, including introductory contact with parents, playground safety.

8:30 - 9:00 p.m. Swim and pool safety orientation.

All-Staff Session 2 (June 7, 1994)

6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Potluck supper and activity.
Communication skills activity: two people sit back-to-back. One has a Lego structure, the other has pile of Lego blocks. Individual with structure must describe structure so that partner can build identical one without seeing it.
Objectives: to realize that what we say is not always clear to others, to understand the need for clear, precise instructions, to realize that individuals have different perspectives. Discuss what this means for working with children.

7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Discussion of positive classroom management and guidance.

7:30 - 9:00 p.m. DAP workshop: Curriculum planning.
1. Activity demonstrating appropriate/inappropriate activities (Dodge, 1993). Everyone is asked to color a complex design and given directions to stay in the lines and work quickly. While doing the activity workshop leader gives inappropriate feedback. Then everyone is given a blank sheet of paper and directions to create whatever they like. Afterward, the group compares the two experiences. (20 minutes)
2. Staff participate in hands-on learning centers which demonstrate developmentally appropriate curriculum activities. Centers will include outdoor activities, field trips, science and art. This presentation approach demonstrates individualizing and providing a range of open-ended activities.

All-Staff Session 3 (July 12, 1994)

Developmentally appropriate curriculum planning and webbing
Prior to inservice meeting, staff were asked to read the following articles:

Miller, S. A. (1994a, March). A curriculum web with sand and water. Scholastic Early Childhood Today, pp. 42-43.

Miller, S. A. (1994b, March). Sand and water around the room. Scholastic Early Childhood Today, pp. 37-41.

In addition, staff were asked to submit topics which were of interest to their group of children.

6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Potluck supper and socializing.

7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Discussion of developmentally appropriate curriculum and brainstorming of questions which can be used to evaluate activities. Although the group will develop own list, possible questions are:

1. Are activities open-ended?
2. Are activities child-directed?
3. Are there opportunities for solitary and group play?
4. Do activities develop social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills?
5. Is topic of interest to children?
6. Are many areas of curriculum involved (language, art, movement, music, math, dramatic play, science)?
7. Can you add props and materials to environment to foster curiosity and problem-solving?
8. Are activities appropriate to needs of individuals and group?
9. Do activities meet the different levels and stages of the children; can activities be geared up and down?

7:30 - 7:45 p.m. Activity: "Pleasant memories from childhood play" (pp. 86-88) from Weinstein, M. & Goodman, J. (1980). Playfair. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact.
The goal of this activity is for participants to recall and share memories of things they enjoyed as play when they were children, to help them achieve a playful frame of mind.

7:45 - 8:30 p.m. Small groups: groupings based on compatibility of class groups with which staff works. Each group will develop a curriculum web on a different topic, using topics suggested by staff. Evaluation questions will be used as guidelines to determine appropriateness of activities. Resource materials will be available.

8:30 - 9:00 p.m. Groups share curriculum webs.

INSERVICE SCHEDULE
August, 1994

Monday, August 22:	
9:30 AM - 12 Noon and 1:30 to 4:00 PM	New Staff Orientation
Tuesday, August 23:	
9:30 - 10:30	Peer meeting: 3 morning classes and 5 morning preschool
10:30 - 11:30	Peer meeting: Beginners
1:30 - 2:30	Peer meeting: Preschool Plus
Wednesday, August 24:	CPR and First Aid Training This is required for everyone who is not current. You will be notified if your training has expired. Times to be announced.
Thursday, August 25:	(All ECE Programs are closed today.)
8:30 AM - 12:30 PM	ALL STAFF: CAJE Conference
1:30 PM - 5:00 PM	ALL STAFF INSERVICE
Friday, August 26:	
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Peer meeting: Combo and Kindergarten classes
10:30 - 11:30 AM	Peer meeting: PreK classes
11:30 AM - 1:30 PM	Staff Buffet Luncheon
1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Extended Day staff meeting
Monday, August 29 through Thursday, September 1	Classroom preparation
Friday, September 2:	
9:00 - 12:30	Open House
Thursday, September 8:	First day of fall semester

New Staff Orientation: August 22, 1994

9:30 a.m. - 12 Noon. Policies and Procedures. Job responsibilities and essential procedures, including health and safety concerns, will be discussed. Every new staff member receives a manual for reference and review.

1:30 - 4:00 p.m. Developmentally Appropriate Practices

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. View and discuss NAEYC video, Developmentally appropriate practice: Children birth through age 5 (Jones & Bowie, 1987).

Key points. Appropriate practices include:

1. Hands-on, play-oriented curriculum.
2. Recognition of different needs at different stages.
3. Age appropriateness.
4. Individual appropriateness.
5. Recognition of varying paces going through same stages.
6. Components include adult-child interaction, environment and curriculum.
7. Quality adult-child interactions which are supportive, responsive and respectful.
8. Curriculum is play-oriented with choices and adults playing with children.
9. Positive guidance.

Individuals will be asked to review sections in Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (Bredekamp, 1987), which pertain to the age group with which they will be working.

2:30 - 3:00 p.m. Hands-on activity. Demonstration of the concept of appropriate/inappropriate activities. (Dodge, 1993).

3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Introduction to positive guidance techniques.

1. Discuss: What is positive guidance?

Share quote:

> Young children are developing self-control and learning what behavior is acceptable and what is not acceptable. They need adults who guide their behavior in positive ways that build self-esteem. This means not punishing children, belittling them,

or yelling at them when they make mistakes, but setting clear and consistent limits. Adults patiently explain the rules to children, redirect them to more acceptable behavior, and help them learn to solve problems on their own. (Koralek, Colker, & Dodge, 1993)

2. Introduce responsive language and conflict resolution through role-playing and brainstorming.

Definition: "Responsive language is language that conveys a positive regard for children and a respect for and acceptance of their individual ideas and feelings" (Stone, 1993).

Situations: What should one say?
a. A child hits another child.
b. You are ready to begin circle time. A child continues to paint.
c. It is time to put away toys and materials.
d. Children are running in the hall.
e. A child is throwing sand.
f. A child is crying.

3. Conflict resolution.
Share article: Moving children from time-out to win/win (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1992).

Discuss steps in conflict resolution.

4. Individual follow-up: Read article, Beyond time-out: Tips from a teacher (Betz, 1994).

Peer Group Meetings (August 23 and 26, 1994)
(1 hour)

Topic: Dramatic Play

Emphasize that developmentally appropriate curriculum should encompass entire environment.

Brainstorming activity (Dodge, 1993)
1. How does dramatic play help children to develop socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively?
2. How can we expand dramatic play?
Role play a scenario with and without props.
Share ideas about prop boxes.
Encourage pretend play which uses substitutes for real objects. This is a more advanced level of play than the use of real objects.
3. Where do we get ideas for dramatic play area?
Children's interests, webbing, themes.

Children's dramatic play reflects different developmental levels.
Encourage observations.
Dramatic play occurs throughout the room and outdoors, not just the "dramatic play" area.

Topic: Block Play

Emphasize that developmentally appropriate curriculum should encompass entire environment.

Role play:
1. Individuals build with blocks. Observe developmental levels and concepts (Dodge, 1993).
2. Problem-solving with blocks.

Brainstorm:
1. Discuss what children learn through block play.
2. How to expand block play. Add props, integrate with other curriculum areas.

All-Staff Session (August 25, 1994)

1:30 - 1:50 p.m. Introductions.

1:50 - 3:00 p.m. Setting up developmentally appropriate environments. (All staff setting up new classroom space)

Discuss article:
Jones, E. & Villarino, G. (1994). What goes up on the classroom walls-and why? Young Children, 49(2),38-40.

View and discuss video, Setting Up the Learning Environment (High/Scope, 1992).

3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Discuss observation techniques and appropriate assessment of children.

4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Issues and recognition of abuse in young children. Guest presenter: social worker.

Assistant's Meetings (October, November, December, 1994)
(1 hour)

Topic: Positive Guidance

October
1. Discuss individual differences and staff expectations.
2. Discuss problem-solving (Crary, 1979).
   Define the problem.
   Observe behaviors.
   Whose problem is it?
   Solutions?
   Implement a strategy.
   Evaluate.
3. Discuss examples suggested by staff.

November
1. Follow-up from October meeting: What have you tried and how did it work?
2. Active Listening (Gordon, 1974).

December
1. Brainstorming: how to avoid problems.
2. Discuss situations staff have had to resolve.

APPENDIX C

INSERVICE EVALUATION FORM

Staff Evaluation of Inservice Sessions

1. Was the information presented useful to you? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?

2. Was the format effective? If no, how can it be improved?

3. What aspect was most helpful to you?

4. What was least useful?

5. What changes or improvements would you like to see?

6. What specific topics would you like more information?

APPENDIX D

SUMMARIES OF INSERVICE MEETINGS

Summary of Inservice Training

June 6: Discussion of thinking and learning processes of children.
What do we know about how children think and learn?

from the environment
by example
by experiencing
doing
being involved in play
repetition
vocalizing
through open-ended questions
from peers
each child has own style of learning
egocentric
from following each other
testing limits
when happy
stages and sequentially (Piagetian theory)
through senses
in positive environment
through building self-esteem
with encouragement
opportunities to make choices
through imagination
by problem solving
time to explore
change over time
interacting with others

We examined children's drawings, responses and anecdotes. Has anyone tried the experiment of looking at whether things are alive or not?

The following conclusions were discussed based on the activities:

Drawings - Young children were interested in the cookie. Children who were a little older were egocentric and put the cookie inside. Older children were interested in things around them. Older children demonstrated better eye-hand coordination and problem solving. They demonstrated greater processing of information. Younger to older children moved from concrete to more abstract thinking.

Anecdotes - Young children are concrete and use concise definitions and literal meanings. Conservation not developed. Limited logical thinking. Egocentric. Use imagination. Have own view of world. Must be specific. Young children only see one attribute.

Questionnaires - Children's thinking developed from concrete to abstract. Three's associated movement with being alive. Egocentric. Children associated being alive with human characteristics. Older children used cognitive testing. Younger children responded through imagination. Word confusions were evident.

June 7:

Communication activity with Legos: We have different perspectives and understandings, as do children. We need to try to understand a child's perspective and consider how we word things to communicate clearly.

Positive classroom management and guidance techniques

Coloring activity: First activity felt pressured, frustrating, creative potential stifled, no choices, coordination uncomfortable, very structured, teacher-directed. Second part felt free, overwhelming, fear of failure, able to have self-expression, sensory experience.

Relate how we felt to how children may feel when we place unrealistic expectations on them. Also, it is important to allow children to create and express themselves. WE SHOULD NOT CREATE OR DRAW FOR THEM.

NOTES FROM JULY INSERVICE

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM:

1. Are the children interested in the topic and activities?

2. Are there enough choices?

3. Are materials readily available for children to take out themselves?

4. Are instructions clear?

5. Is there enough time allotted?

6. Is it child-centered?

7. Is there enough space?

8. Is the environment conducive to the experience?

9. Do activities meet different developmental levels?

10. Are there outside resources available?

11. Is curriculum integrated throughout program areas? Is it a whole language approach?

12. Has cultural diversity and anti-bias been considered?

INSERVICE NOTES: NEW STAFF ORIENTATION
Monday, August 22, 1994

Perceptions from the the video on Developmentally Appropriate Practices: Important points.

1. Freedom of expression for children.
2. Different choices available. Children can make own decisions.
3. Age appropriate.
4. Active involvement: Adults play with children and get down on their level.
5. Music integrated into the curriculum.
6. Allow time with routine tasks. Children's time frame different from adults. Provide information.
7. Let children be independent and do tasks for themselves.
8. TLC
9. Time for large and small motor activities.
10. Active participation in group activities.
11. Allow for individual developmental differences.

Hands-on activity

1. How did it feel to do highly structured coloring activity?

Frustrating, confusing, awkward, memories of hurrying, pressured, challenging but a drag, restrictive, need to concentrate, stupid, lacked positive reinforcers.
Advantages? discipline/self-discipline, enlightening activity for adult.

2. How did it feel to do open-ended activity?

Relaxed, creative, unrestricted, happy, contented, absorbed, free to choose.
Advantages? self-expression, imagination, self-affirmation.

Positive guidance

1. Responsive language uses logic and reasoning, encourages independence and autonomy, uses nurturant control, and elaborates. Uses calm tone of voice, builds self-esteem.
2. Restrictive language asserts power, discourages independence, controls, and lectures.
3. Examples of responsive language:

A child is hitting: hitting hurts (provides information), how would you feel (using logic), what else could you do (fosters autonomy), instead of hitting can you ask if you can play with the toy (elaborates, offers choice).

Clean-up time: make a game of it (encouraging autonomy), can you show me where this goes (autonomy, nurturing).

4. Conflict resolution:

Identify the problem. Reflect back what each child

says. Ask for solutions. Again, reflect back each child's suggestions and ask the other if this is a possible solution. Offer choices the children could consider if they do not have any suggestions. Model and involve yourself in play to facilitate solution.

5. For young children with less developed verbal skills redirection into another activity can be effective.

APPENDIX E

STAFF AND PARENT UPDATES

TO: ECE STAFF
RE: STAFF UPDATE: END OF SESSION 1
DATE: JUNE 28, 1994

THANK YOU EVERYONE! THIS HAS BEEN A GREAT FIRST SESSION OF CAMP.
We hope the following information will be helpful in winding up session 1 and beginning session 2.

1. Friday, July 1, is the last day of session 1. Please check your lists to be aware of those children who will not be with you for session 2 so that we can provide closure for them.

We will end the session with a special celebration, an "ice cream social". Please let us know what time you wish to have snack and we will have a tray ready for you with all the necessary ingredients.

2. For those children who are leaving camp, please complete the brief form, Camper Evaluation, for their file. This is helpful information for others who may have the children in the future.

3. For those children who will be starting camp in Session 2, beginning July 5, please call the parents to introduce yourself, provide information on swims, etc., and inquire about allergies, etc. **IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT CONTACT IS MADE WITH EVERY NEW FAMILY.** Thank you for your efforts in taking the time to make these calls.

4. If you have not returned the inservice evaluations, please do so. Your input is valuable to us.

5. Please mark your calendars...our next inservice is scheduled for Tuesday evening, July 12. This will be an all-staff evening.

6. The attached handout is for follow-up information to the activities and discussions we had about art activities.

ONCE AGAIN, THANKS FOR THE GREAT JOB YOU ARE ALL DOING!

TO: ALL ECE STAFF
RE: BEGINNING SESSION 2
DATE: JULY 5, 1994

WELCOME TO SESSION 2! YOU MADE SESSION 1 TERRIFIC SO WE KNOW WE'RE OFF TO A GREAT START.

1. Please wear name tags. It is especially important this week as we have some new children and parents starting camp.

2. All head teachers should have received updated lists for children attending extended day. Please bring extended day children to the door opposite the bathrooms at 12:30. This allows Charlene to dismiss her morning class through the other door. Thank you for your assistance with this transition period.

3. **ALL STAFF INSERVICE: Our mid-summer all staff inservice is scheduled for Tuesday, July 12, from 6 to 9 pm. Everyone is expected to participate.** Our topic for the evening will be curriculum. Since interest has been expressed in more information on curriculum webbing, this will be our main topic for the evening. The purpose of our inservice evenings is not only to expand our knowledge and share ideas but to get to know each other better. We look forward to seeing you there.

4. Some really great activities have been going on around the school such as the fence artwork. Field trips have gone very well, too. Thank you for your hard work to make this all happen!

5. Have you connected with your peer match-ups? If not, and you have forgotten who you are paired with, we'll post the list in the office. A few friendly words or an exchange of ideas can perk us up on these hot and draining summer days.

TO: ALL ECE STAFF
DATE: JULY 18, 1994
RE: STAFF UPDATE

1. Thank you everyone for a great inservice session last week. From your feedback, most of you found it to be time well spent. Attached to this update are copies of 3 curriculum webs which were developed that evening. We hope that these will be useful to you. As you can see, webbing can be used with any topic as the starting point and expanded in many directions. Don't forget that your group of children also can add to the brainstorming of topics.

2. We also appreciate how timely everyone has been in turning in curriculum plans. You all are doing a terrific job planning exciting curriculum for your groups which is developmentally appropriate. Activities such as pioneer toys and western style meals provided that hands-on approach. I hope you keep networking and sharing ideas among yourselves because there's so much going on among the various classes.

3. Also attached is a handout about water play which seemed a nice follow-up to the sand and water webbing we discussed.

TO: ALL ECE STAFF
DATE: SEPTEMBER 14, 1994
RE: UPDATE

The school year has gotten off to a great start...thanks to each of you. Not only do the rooms look terrific, but parents and children are happy. I know we have had to contend with some inconveniences, but your tolerant and positive attitudes are conveyed to families. If we continue to look on the bright side, others will also.

For your information:
1. **BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT** is scheduled for next Thursday evening, September 22, 1994, at 7 PM. Head teachers are required to attend to welcome your families and share with them information about your plans for the year. We will begin in the Social Hall and the evening will have a new look. (Details at staff meeting, 12:30, Wed., Sept. 14.) **PLEASE PUBLICIZE THE EVENT WITH YOUR FAMILIES AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO ATTEND.**

2. **CAEYC**: If you are planning to attend the CAEYC conference on October 8, please let us know. We try to provide partial reimbursement of the costs, but we need to know before the event. This is always a very worthwhile conference and we encourage participation for those who are able to attend.

3. **Attendance sheets**: Please be sure to take attendance daily. All attendance sheets must be turned into the office. We are required to keep these records for several years. Also, if a child is absent for more than one day and we have not received a call from the parents, please call and check on the child. When a child has a contagious illness, we need to send notes home to parents of the other children in the class.

4. We are happy to welcome back Joan, our consulting psychologist. Joan will be around visiting all our classes and providing support and information to us.

5. Head teachers: please be sure to turn in lesson plans and copies of your weekly notes and monthly letters to parents (before these are distributed). You may use either the planning form we used in the summer, or the plan book sheets. In either case, please incorporate all your activity areas in your plans.

TO: ECE STAFF
DATE: SEPTEMBER 22, 1994
RE: UPDATE

TONIGHT IS BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT!
Please remind parents, hang up reminder by door, etc. We start at 7 PM in the Social Hall.

It would be helpful if you arrive a few minutes early so that you can help us meet and greet parents. We would like at least one teacher at each table, so please spread out. Also, please facilitate the block activity that will be on each table (see information about this). This is for parents to do as they enter and mingle, so please encourage them to come to the tables and engage them.

Your task is to assist with the block activity on each table at "Back-to-School" Night.

1. Please encourage parents to become involved in this activity.

2. Directions are on each table. There are 3 different activities around the room.

3. Model teacher role in the classroom with children:
   -Ask questions to extend ideas.
   -Comment on observations.
   -Note what parents are saying...point out concepts.

4. After parents have engaged in the activity at your table, if there is still time, encourage them to look at activities at other tables.

The purpose of this activity is to provide a small demonstration of what children learn through play and to assist parents in appreciating a developmental approach to early childhood education.
Also, we hope it will be a fun ice breaker.

THANKS FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN GETTING OUR EVENING STARTED!

TO: ALL ECE STAFF
DATE: SEPTEMBER 26, 1994
RE: UPDATE

Thank you for helping to make Back-to-School Night a success!

Other information:
1. Wednesday staff meeting schedule for October:
October 5: Head teachers. Topic: discussion of outreach services available to children with special needs at our center.
October 12: Head teachers. Topic: how to handle negative behaviors.
October 19: Head teachers.
October 26: Assistant teachers. Topic: positive guidance.

8. Coming events:
Week of October 10: school pictures
Month of October: gift wrap sales (fundraiser)

9. Head teachers: please stop by the office to schedule individual conferences with the director so that we can discuss how everything is going as we settle into the school year and your goals for the children and yourself.

PARENT UPDATE
September 14, 1994

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

Back-to-School night is *Thursday evening, September 22, 1994*. We look forward to meeting you in the Social Hall at 7:00 PM. The evening will begin with a fresh approach and include brief introductions. Then it is on to our new rooms for an orientation by the teachers to your child's class. Please join us for this important get acquainted event.

RENOVATION UPDATE

Thank you for bearing with us as we moved into our new quarters. As with most new homes, ours has needed a few adjustments. The lockers are now bolted to the walls and in use by the children, and the air conditioning is up and running. You may have noticed that some of the bathrooms were temporarily closed. The problems have been worked out and these, too, will be available to us. We have been very grateful for the quick attention our school has received when problems arose and it has been great to be in our bright, new rooms.

MOM AND TOT CLASSES

Great Start and Play and Learn classes will begin in October. Registration forms are available in the ECE office.

PARENT UPDATE
September 30, 1994

THANK YOU...

for sharing Back-to-School Night with us. It was wonderful to see so many of our families that evening! If you were unable to attend, attached is information we shared that evening on how children learn through playing with blocks. This is a good example of what we mean when we talk about a "developmentally appropriate" curriculum.

OCTOBER EVENTS

Please mark your calendars for the following events:

SCHOOL PICTURES: Picture-taking is scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, October 12 and 13. Teachers will notify you concerning which day your child's class will have their photos taken. Further information is attached.

GIFT WRAP FUNDRAISER: Our Parent Advisory Committee is doing a gift wrap sale for a fundraiser. Please see the attached information. The holidays will be here before we know it, and we'd like to help you get ready for it while providing you the opportunity to support our school and parent volunteer effort. Proceeds from our fundraisers support scholarships, special purchases for the school and the Teacher Appreciation luncheon at the end of the school year.

MOM AND TOT CLASSES

Great Start and Play and Learn classes begin the week of October 3. Registration forms are available in the ECE office.

AFTERNOON CLASSES

Openings are available in afternoon classes.
For further information, or to register for any of these classes, please call or stop by the ECE office.

APPENDIX F

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Annotated Bibliography

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the body, oneself and others.

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Rosen, I. (1993, November/December). Setting the stage for dramatic play. Scholastic Early Childhood Today, pp. 64-65. The article suggests ways to extend learning through dramatic play.

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Swanson, L. (1994). Changes-how our nursery school replaced adult-directed art projects with child-directed experiences and changed to an accredited, child-sensitive, developmentally appropriate school. Young Children, 49(4), 69-73. The author described the process of change to a developmentally appropriate program.

Workman, S., & Anziano, M. C. (1993). Curriculum webs: Weaving connections from children to teachers. Young Children, 48(2), 4-9. The authors describe curriculum webs and how to use them, including detailed illustrations of webs.

APPENDIX G

GOALS SHEET

Name_____

Date_____

GOAL SETTING

My goal is:

My time frame and steps I will take to accomplish goal:

Time required	Steps
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.